



**REVIVAL!**

Cover: 46.

# **REVIVAL!**

*By*

**ELEANOR DICKINSON**

**SEPTEMBER 25-NOVEMBER 1, 1970**  
**THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of the Corcoran Gallery of Art I wish to express gratitude to the following lenders: Mr. and Mrs. W. Edward Booker, Knoxville; Dr. and Mrs. Hugh Rose, San Francisco; Jo Hanson Schlesinger, San Francisco; The Dulin Gallery of Art, Knoxville; The William Sawyer Gallery, San Francisco.

My sincerest thanks go also to Contemporary Films/McGraw Hill for its generous loan of the prize-winning film *Holy Ghost People*. Filmed in 1966-67 by Peter Adair, the film documents a typical service of a Pentecostal Church in West Virginia where handling venomous snakes and drinking strychnine are part of the normal ritual.

For her introduction to this catalogue thanks to Elizabeth Coffelt, a freelance writer from San Francisco who has long been familiar with the artist's work.

Of the Gallery staff I wish to thank Associate Director Hal Glicksman for his assistance in the installation of the exhibition, and Director Walter Hopps for his overall guidance. Thanks also to Joe Stewart who worked with staff members on various aspects of the exhibition.

My special thanks to the artist, Eleanor Creekmore Dickinson, for her invaluable collaboration and assistance in every phase of the exhibition from inception to installation.

NINA FELSHIN OSNOS



## ARTIST'S NOTE

For the past three summers I have been drawing, tape recording, and assembling the media for *Revival!*, an exhibition set in the ambience of a tent revival meeting in the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee.

A revival is an evangelistic service or series of services—usually 10 days in the summer—for the purpose of effecting a religious awakening. Traditionally, revivals have been held in open tents, but urbanization and the availability of air-conditioned public facilities and churches have resulted in a sharply decreasing number of tents.

For the people of East Tennessee revivals are a big emotional outlet. There isn't much else emotional in their lives. They are quiet, they work hard, they are strongly loyal to their families and to each other. Their hands and bodies are bent from working, their faces kind and during these revivals exalted. It's very, very important to them. When they get up to speak they may cry. They believe speech is closely tied to the ability to think, to the act of faith. They believe that God is using their bodies to act out some purpose—that God is speaking when they are, *speaking-in-tongues*. When one of them has a revelation he is, at that moment, holy—God is speaking through him. The rest are very hushed and reverent and may sing, "Come by here, my Lord, come by here."

The drawings and tapes were done in or near Pigeon Forge, Goose Gap, Happy Hollow, Sevierville, Maryville, Valley Grove, Elkmont, Knoxville, Wear Valley, Mucktown, Lebanon, Sunset Gap, and Clinton during the past three summers. Some of the services were individual missions, some were sponsored by churches. The latter include Baptist, Church of God, Assembly of God, Missionary Baptist, Primitive Baptist, and Pentecostal; their religious customs differ—sometimes greatly. The congregations were white, black, and black and white.



Many of the phenomena depicted may become extinct, as they are now becoming remote. I was privileged to be the guest of these evangelical groups—to draw and make tapes—because, having been raised a Southern Baptist in East Tennessee (I lived in a cabin my grandparents built in the heart of the Smokies during the summer and in Knoxville the rest of the year) and having taught Sunday School for six years, I satisfied the Evangelists and pastors that my intent was artistic and documentary. Indeed, I believe they felt me to be a kind of missionary.

*Revival!* is straight—no satire, no propaganda. Still, there is a wide range of public reaction to the exhibition—very similar to the range felt by persons at a 'real' revival. When the show was presented at the Dulin Gallery of Art in Knoxville, Tennessee last April some people came and worshipped, some laughed, the University students thought it was a good trip or a happening, and some sat in the middle of the room and cried.

ELEANOR CREEKMORE DICKINSON



## INTRODUCTION

Eleanor Creekmore Dickinson has been a prominent member of the San Francisco art community since 1954, when she opened her first studio as a painter and printmaker. The outsized drawings for which she is now known evolved in the early 1960's with her *People in Boxes* series of dramatically foreshortened figures, powerful contour line drawings of human expression, sharply black on white.

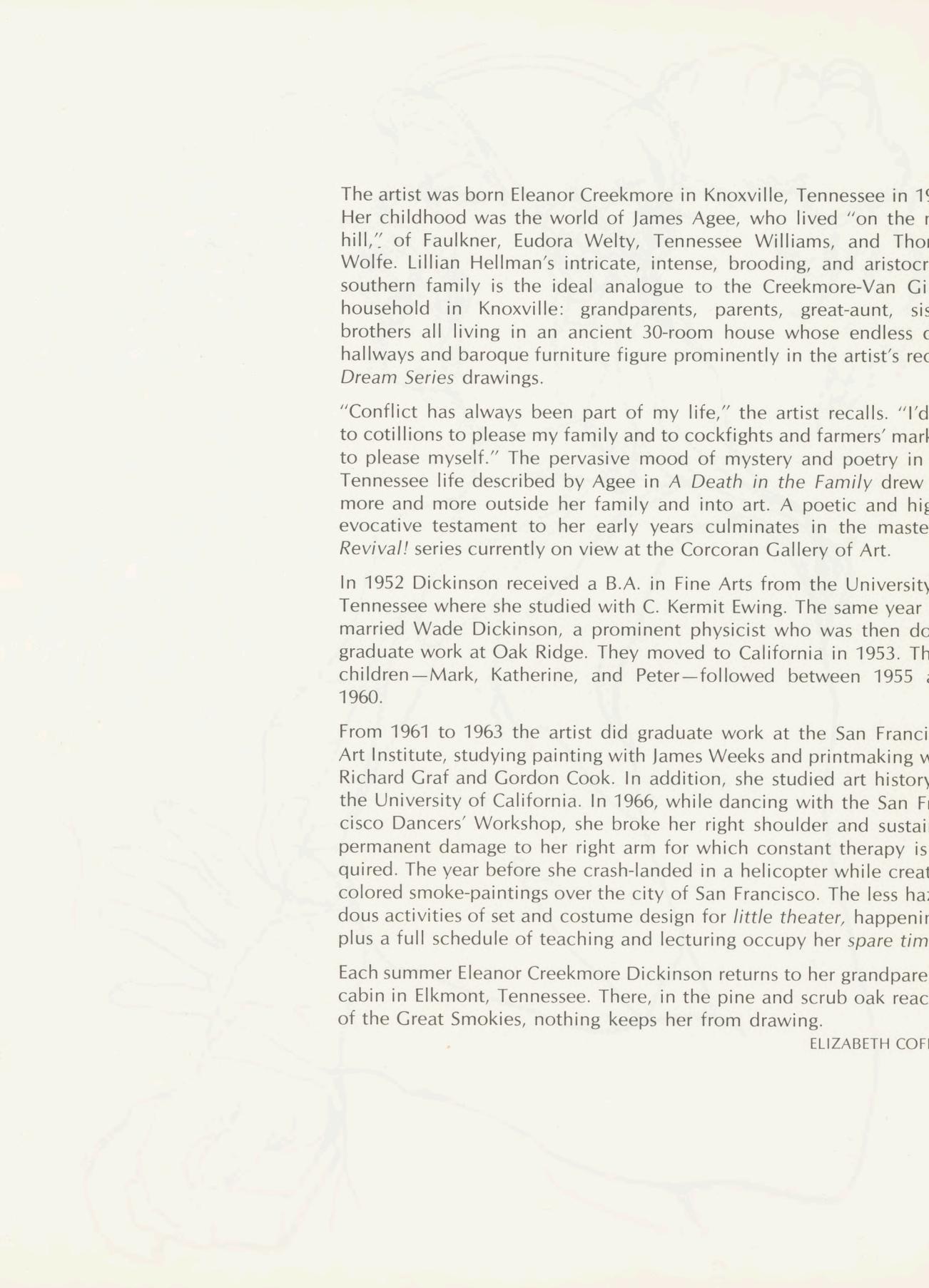
The present *Revival!* series, completed during summer tenancies in the Great Smoky Mountains, is the artist's definitive statement of the past 10 years. It contains 84 drawings, many depicting the instant of transfiguration in the lives of the mountain people of Tennessee. Dickinson, herself a native of Tennessee, clearly feels a strong sense of passion and reality as evidenced by the sometimes apocalyptic religious moments she documents.

Dickinson's work is intuitive and direct: great stillness and concentration; no sketching motions common to the drawing experience, but an unbroken, fluid motion of her whole arm that describes first the "critical point of action—the crisis point—the relationship between two figures, the point of intensity."

The artist says that the single motion coming from the shoulder and informing wrist and hand—in much the same way that a great pianist moves shoulder, elbow, forearm, and wrist—frees her from the stereotyped forms of calligraphic drawing common to those who learned to draw with wrist and hand only. The result is a gradual, almost imperceptible, emergence of the image on paper; there seems to be little happening at first; it is much like watching the image emerge on sensitized paper in the darkroom. Magically, it is all there at once, and the drawing stops. (To achieve the sure, clean, unbroken line Dickinson used a Rapidograph pen until a shoulder injury in 1965 forced her to change to a felt pen with permanent ink for less *drag* on the paper.)

There are vast white spaces in her drawings, but also areas of meticulous attention to expressive detail superbly drawn. She does not sketch or plan drawings. She works always with models who must care equally about the experience. She never directs the models in poses but works and talks with them until a mood or emotion emerges that is real for both of them. The action then has a heightened quality; it becomes the drawing.





The artist was born Eleanor Creekmore in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1931. Her childhood was the world of James Agee, who lived "on the next hill," of Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams, and Thomas Wolfe. Lillian Hellman's intricate, intense, brooding, and aristocratic southern family is the ideal analogue to the Creekmore-Van Gilder household in Knoxville: grandparents, parents, great-aunt, sister, brothers all living in an ancient 30-room house whose endless dark hallways and baroque furniture figure prominently in the artist's recent *Dream Series* drawings.

"Conflict has always been part of my life," the artist recalls. "I'd go to cotillions to please my family and to cockfights and farmers' markets to please myself." The pervasive mood of mystery and poetry in the Tennessee life described by Agee in *A Death in the Family* drew her more and more outside her family and into art. A poetic and highly evocative testament to her early years culminates in the masterful *Revival!* series currently on view at the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

In 1952 Dickinson received a B.A. in Fine Arts from the University of Tennessee where she studied with C. Kermit Ewing. The same year she married Wade Dickinson, a prominent physicist who was then doing graduate work at Oak Ridge. They moved to California in 1953. Three children—Mark, Katherine, and Peter—followed between 1955 and 1960.

From 1961 to 1963 the artist did graduate work at the San Francisco Art Institute, studying painting with James Weeks and printmaking with Richard Graf and Gordon Cook. In addition, she studied art history at the University of California. In 1966, while dancing with the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop, she broke her right shoulder and sustained permanent damage to her right arm for which constant therapy is required. The year before she crash-landed in a helicopter while creating colored smoke-paintings over the city of San Francisco. The less hazardous activities of set and costume design for *little theater*, happenings, plus a full schedule of teaching and lecturing occupy her spare time.

Each summer Eleanor Creekmore Dickinson returns to her grandparents' cabin in Elkmont, Tennessee. There, in the pine and scrub oak reaches of the Great Smokies, nothing keeps her from drawing.

ELIZABETH COFFELT





In my name shall they cast out  
with new tongues. They shall  
they drink any deadly thing, it  
shall lay hands on the sick, a

ut out devils; they shall speak  
hall take up serpents, and if  
g, it shall not hurt them. They  
k, and they shall recover.

—MARK 16











## **GLOSSARY**

CASTING-OUT-DEVILS	Praying over one believed to be possessed by devils; success is usually indicated by the afflicted person speaking-in-tongues or praying.
FAITH-HEALING	Praying for the sick with the expectation of immediate healing if the victim's faith in God is strong enough.
FOOT-WASHING	An ancient custom described in the Bible (John 13:1-5).
INVITATION	To come up to the front of the tent, confess sins, and repent.
LAYING-ON-OF-HANDS	An ancient religious custom described in the Bible in which the Saved place their hands on the head of the penitent so that the Holy Ghost can enter him through them.
PROPHESYING	While in a state resembling trance, the individual speaks in the first person as if God were speaking; wording is usually biblical.
REVIVAL	An evangelistic service or series of services (usually 10 days in the summer) for the purpose of effecting a religious awakening; traditionally in open tents.
SPEAKING-IN-TONGUES	An ancient phenomenon of persons in ecstacy feeling that they are "possessed by the Holy Ghost" and "allowing God to speak through them." Praying in unintelligible words that sound rather like a Romance or Oriental language. Considered a sign of God's favor and acceptance.
TESTIFYING	Usually by members of the congregation who bear witness to what God has done in their lives.



## ONE-WOMAN EXHIBITIONS

**1958** Lesser Gallery, San Francisco  
University of San Francisco

**1959** Lucien Labaudt Gallery, San Francisco

**1961** Bolles Gallery, San Francisco

**1964** McClung Museum, Knoxville

**1965** San Francisco Museum of Art

**1966** Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, Calif.

**1967** Trutton Gallery, San Francisco

**1968** Magnes Museum, Berkeley, Calif.  
De Young Museum, San Francisco

**1970** William Sawyer Gallery, San Francisco  
Dulin Gallery of Art, Knoxville

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

**1960** Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio, 25th Annual  
Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, *Church Art Today*

**1961** Frye Museum, Seattle, *West Coast Annual*  
San Francisco Museum of Art, *San Francisco Art Institute Annual*

**1962** Glade Gallery, New Orleans  
Richmond Art Center, Richmond, Calif., 11th *Museum Annual*  
De Young Museum, San Francisco, *San Francisco Art Institute Biennial*

**1963** California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, *Fourth Winter  
Invitational*

**1964** De Young Museum, *San Francisco New Images*  
Hansen Gallery, San Francisco, *Drawings*

**1965** McClung Museum, Knoxville, *Retrospective*  
San Francisco Art Institute Gallery, *Drawings*  
University of California, San Francisco, *Florence Allen Herself*  
San Francisco Art Institute Gallery, *Natural and Supernatural*  
Esther Robles Gallery, San Francisco

**1966** Richmond Art Center, Richmond, Calif., 15th *Museum Annual*  
San Francisco Art Institute Gallery, *Self-Portraits*

**1967** San Francisco Museum of Art, *Eight San Francisco Women Artists*  
City of San Francisco Circulating Exhibition, Art Commission

**1968** Oakland Art Museum, Oakland, Calif.  
Mills College Art Gallery, Oakland, Calif., *The John Bolles Collection*

**1969** Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, San Diego, Calif., *Picard Collection:  
Menagerie by Modern Masters*

**1970** Stanford Research Institute, Stanford, Calif., *Eight Artists*



## CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION

Dimensions given in inches; height precedes width.  
Medium is felt pen on paper.

1. HAVE YOU BEEN TO JESUS FOR THE CLEANSING POW'R? undated, 84 x 36
2. WE NEED MORE OLD TIME CAMP MEETINGS 1969, 72 x 36
3. THERE'S A GREAT DAY COMING 1968, 72 x 36
4. THERE IS A FOUNTAIN FILLED WITH BLOOD 1969, 46 x 35
5. I AM THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE 1969, 35 x 23
6. ABIDE WITH ME 1969, 38 x 26
7. O LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO 1969, 22 x 17
8. GLORY HALLELUJAH I SHALL NOT BE MOVED 1968, 46 x 35
9. THERE'S A BALM IN GILEAD 1969, 20 x 15
10. THE BLOOD, THE BLOOD IS ALL MY PLEA 1968, 35 x 23
11. CARELESS SOUL O HEED THE WARNING 1968, 34 x 18
12. WE'RE MARCHING TO ZION 1969, 35 x 46
13. LORD, SEND THE OLD TIME POW'R, THE PENTECOSTAL POW'R! 1968, 46 x 35
14. BLESSED ASSURANCE, JESUS IS MINE! 1969, 37 x 26
15. IN THE CROSS IN THE CROSS 1969, 37 x 26
16. STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS 1969, 37 x 26
17. GREAT DAY! GREAT DAY, THE RIGHTEOUS MARCHING 1968, 35 x 23
18. HE LEADETH ME, HE LEADETH ME 1969, 32 x 36
19. CONFESS HIM TODAY BEFORE MEN 1969, 35 x 46
20. WHAT A HALLELUJAH MEETING 1969, 39 x 26

21. WHEN DAVID DANCED BEFORE THE LORD 1969, 35 x 28

22. O I CARE NOT WHAT CHURCH YOU BELONG TO 1968, 40 x 26

23. COME FROM THE LOATHSOME WAY OF SIN 1968, 46 x 35  
Lent by Jo Hanson Schlesinger, San Francisco

24. SHALL WE GATHER AT THE RIVER 1968, 26 x 38

25. JESUS LOVES ME! THIS I KNOW 1969, 38 x 26

26. YES, MOSES LED THE PEOPLE AT THE LORD'S COMMAND 1969, 17 x 12

27. WILL THERE BE ANY STARS, ANY STARS IN MY CROWN 1968, 46 x 35

28. UNDER THE BLOOD UNDER THE BLOOD 1969, 20 x 13

29. LIFE IS LIKE A MOUNTAIN RAILROAD 1969, 29 x 19

30. COME BY HERE, MY LORD 1969, 19 x 13

31. WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY? 1969, 34 x 23

32. ON JORDAN'S STORMY BANK I STAND 1969, 46 x 35

33. WE'LL BE LIKE HIM 1969, 34 x 23

34. SATAN WILL BE BOUND A THOUSAND YEARS 1969, 18 x 12

35. WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS 1968, 26 x 36

36. WHEN GOD SHUT NOAH IN THE GRAND OLD ARK 1968, 40 x 36  
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Hugh Rose, Jr., San Francisco

37. ON A HILL FAR AWAY STOOD AN OLD RUGGED CROSS 1969, 23 x 13

38. AMAZING GRACE 1968, 46 x 35

39. BOUGHT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS 1969, 19 x 13

40. MARCHING ON, ON, ON, TO GLORY 1969, 35 x 25

41. I LOOKED OVER JORDAN 1968, 38 x 26  
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Hugh Rose, Jr., San Francisco

42. TODAY AS I WAS STROLLING BY THE CHURCHYARD 1968, 40 x 26

43. SOWING IN THE MORNING 1968, 46 x 35

44. HALLELUJAH! THINE THE GLORY 1969, 32 x 23

45. OH, WHERE IS MY BOY TONIGHT? 1969, 35 x 20

46. NOTHING CAN FOR SIN ATONE 1968, 46 x 35  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. W. Edward Booker, Knoxville

47. O, I'M GONNA TAKE A TRIP IN THE GOOD OLD GOSPEL SHIP 1969, 40 x 30

48. PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD 1969, 40 x 30

49. MY SOUL RECEIVED A FLOOD OF GLORY undated, 37 x 26

50. LET THE LOWER LIGHTS BE BURNING 1968, 46 x 35

51. COME TO THE CHURCH BY THE WILDWOOD 1969, 40 x 30

52. TELEPHONE TO GLORY 1969, 46 x 35

53. GIVE ME THAT OLD TIME RELIGION 1968, 39 x 25

54. BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS 1969, 35 x 46

55. HAVE THINE OWN WAY, LORD 1969, 40 x 26

56. MY FAITH LOOKS UP TO THEE 1969, 40 x 31

57. AND HE WALKS WITH ME 1969, 39 x 26

58. JUST AS I AM 1969, 27 x 23

59. IS THY HEART RIGHT WITH GOD? 1969, 40 x 35

60. IN THAT GREAT GETTIN UP MORNING 1969, 32 x 26

61. IT IS JOY UNSPEAKABLE 1969, 46 x 35

62. NEARER MY GOD TO THEE! 1969, 46 x 35

63. AT THE CROSS, AT THE CROSS 1969, 39 x 26

64. I'M UNDER THE BLOOD OF JESUS 1969, 46 x 35  
Lent by The Dulin Gallery of Art, Knoxville

65. I SHALL MEET MY DEAR OLD MOTHER BYE AND BYE 1969, 46 x 35

66. GUIDE ME, O THOU GREAT JEHOVAH! 1969, 46 x 35

67. ELIJAH'S GOD STILL LIVES TODAY 1969, 39 x 26

68. HE LIVES! HE LIVES! CHRIST JESUS LIVES TODAY! 1969, 46 x 35

69. T'WAS AN OLD-FASHIONED MEETING 1968, 46 x 35

70. O BEULAH LAND, SWEET BEULAH LAND 1969, 35 x 46

71. I'VE WANDERED FAR AWAY FROM GOD 1969, 39 x 26

72. OH, DO NOT LET THE WORD DEPART 1969, 39 x 26

73. LET JESUS COME INTO YOUR HEART 1969, 46 x 35

74. A SUNBEAM, A SUNBEAM 1968, 46 x 35

75. THEN SING, MY SOUL MY SAVIOR, GOD, TO THEE 1968, 46 x 35

76. WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN 1968, 46 x 35

77. I'M JUST A WEARY PILGRIM 1969, 39 x 26

78. WHAT A BEAUTIFUL THOUGHT I AM THINKING 1968, 26 x 39

79. SIN HAS LEFT ME SORE AND BLEEDING 1969, 22 x 39

80. TAKE THE NAME OF JESUS WITH YOU 1968, 46 x 35

81. ON CHRIST THE SOLID ROCK I STAND 1970, 34 x 23

82. MY FAITH LOOKS UP TO THEE 1969, 15 x 15

83. WHEN THE TRUMPETS OF THE LORD SHALL SOUND 1969, 35 x 23

84. JOHN TELLS OF A CITY 1969, 26 x 27

